

21 April

Br MICHAEL HAYWARD 14 November 1925 – 21 April 2015



In January 2015 this writer was in Preston, NE England, visiting three members of the then Zimbabwe province; two of them were grumpy and unsettled but the third, Michael Hayward, though ‘shrouded in oxygen cylinders and looking crumpled, still beamed with his wonted courtesy and old-world refinement.’ In one sense, Michael just did not fit in and when he was at Arrupe House, the Juniorate in Harare in the early 1990s, the scholastics had a hard time understanding him and relating to him. He preferred things in the Church and the Society as they had been, not as they were. He

would always wear his gown to Mass and stand for the gospel. But his behaviour never got in the way of his courtesy and kindness to all.

He was unique, or at least very unusual, in his love for nature and animals in particular. He had a little corner, in a little used porch at Arrupe House, for Lassie, his collie dog, with various furnishings and decorations. He had names for animals in his care and the cows at Chishawasha would respond to his call. Tom Shufflebotham wrote that after Michael returned to England, ‘every cow in Lancashire seems to have found her way into Michael’s photo album.’ At St George’s, he would pick up the scraps left by the students after their mid-morning break and feed them to the rain birds who were still sighted coming to the college in expectation after he had left.

Born in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, he worked as a grocer’s assistant and in a brewery until he was called to serve in the Royal Air Force (Signals) during the war. He saw service in Singapore and Sri Lanka where he first met the Jesuits. After the war, he returned to the brewery and it was 1950 before he made his way to the novitiate, and after a few years, Africa.

In 1955 he was working the farm at Monte Cassino and remembered the moment when Francis Markall went ‘as white as a sheet’ on hearing he was to be the new archbishop. (It was supposed to be a secret at first but when Chichester received the ‘highly confidential’ news over the phone, he burst out in the hearing of all at Campion House, ‘What! Markall?’) From



1959 to ’64 Michael was at Chishawasha caring for the farm – and the cows. Then he returned to Monte Cassino and again, in 1972, returned to Chishawasha, before moving to Hartmann House (St George’s) in 1980. After a brief stay at Arrupe he went back to England in 1995 and spent his last twenty years at Preston without, to his disappointment, a proper job. He simply made himself useful in the dining room and helping with the shopping.

The Society of Jesus is amazing. We have the eminent people like Karl Rahner and Teilhard de Chardin, but we also have the ‘little people’ like Michael Hayward who never seem to have ‘done’ anything much and yet gave their own particular witness of deep inner peace and patience in a life that, outwardly, never seemed to come together.